



Patient & Family Guide
2020

Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

Aussi disponible en français :
Surveiller la tension artérielle à la maison
(FF85-2197)



www.nshealth.ca

Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

What is hypertension?

- Blood pressure (BP) is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries as your heart pumps blood through your body.
- Hypertension means that your BP is higher than normal. High BP makes your heart work harder with every heartbeat. Untreated hypertension puts you at a higher risk for a heart attack, heart failure, stroke, dementia, or kidney failure.
- BP is measured in units called “millimetres of mercury” (mm Hg). When your primary health care provider measures your BP in the clinic, there is a higher (systolic) number when the heart beats, and a lower (diastolic) number when the heart relaxes.
- For most people, normal BP is 140/90 mm Hg or less.
- When BP is measured at home, normal BP is 135/85 mm Hg or less.

What are the advantages of monitoring your BP at home?

- Monitoring BP at home puts you in control.
- White Coat Hypertension can happen when your BP measures higher in your primary health care provider's office because you may be nervous or anxious.
- When you measure your BP at home, you are likely more relaxed. If your BP is 135/85 mm Hg or less, then you do not have hypertension. This means that you do not need medication to lower your BP, but you may need to make healthy changes to your lifestyle (such as losing weight through healthy eating, exercising, and lowering your sodium [salt] intake).
- Measuring your BP at home also lets you monitor your response to lifestyle changes and/or BP-lowering medications.

Buying a BP monitor

1. Before buying a monitor, visit Hypertension Canada's website for a list of recommended devices. These devices are checked for accuracy and show "Recommended by Hypertension Canada" on the box.
2. You can buy a monitor at a pharmacy, a department or medical supply store, or online.

3. Make sure that the monitor is fully automatic and has a memory to store readings, so that you can show them to your primary health care provider. You can also keep a paper log of your readings (see table below).
4. Ask staff to explain the monitor's features and how to use it properly. It is important to check that the cuff size fits your upper arm. A cuff that is too small results in false high readings, and a cuff that is too big results in false low readings.
5. Ask your primary health care provider to check your monitor's accuracy. This can be done by bringing your monitor to your primary health care provider's office and comparing the readings taken with your monitor to those taken by the clinic monitor.
6. If you have an irregular pulse (atrial fibrillation), your BP readings may not be accurate.

Logging your results (sample table):

Date:	Day:	Time:	Heart rate (beats per min.):	BP reading: Systolic/ Diastolic (mm Hg)		
				#1	#2	#3
Nov. 23	Day 1	8 am	75	145/95	140/90	135/85
		8 pm	72	158/92	150/85	140/80

How do I measure my BP?

BP is measured using an inflatable cuff over your upper arm that is attached to a monitor.

1. Measure your BP before you take your medication(s).
2. Do not smoke, drink caffeine, or exercise for at least 30 minutes before taking your BP.
3. Make sure to pee before taking your BP.
4. Sit on a chair, with your feet flat on the floor and your back supported by the back of the chair. Rest your arm on a table at heart level (see image).
5. Place the cuff snugly over your bare arm, with the lower edge about an inch (2.5 cm) above your elbow.
6. After sitting quietly with no distractions for 5 minutes, take 3 readings, taking one reading every 2 to 3 minutes. Write down the readings if your monitor does not store them.
7. Measure your BP in the morning and evening for 7 days in a row, at the same times each day.
8. Show your readings to your primary health care provider.

Ideal BP at home

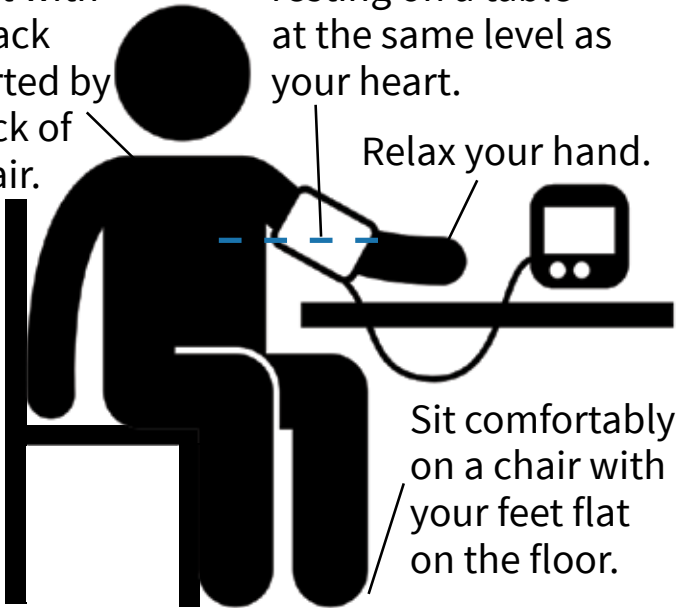
Different targets are used depending on whether your BP is measured in your primary health care provider's office or at home.

- If you do not have diabetes, your target blood pressure is 135/85 mm Hg or less.
- If you have diabetes, your target blood pressure is 130/80 mm Hg or less.

Sit up straight with your back supported by the back of the chair.

The arm should be resting on a table at the same level as your heart.

Relax your hand.



Sit comfortably on a chair with your feet flat on the floor.

If you have questions, please contact your primary health care provider or visit:

› www.hypertension.ca

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

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Prepared by: Hypertension Clinic, QEII

Illustration by: The Noun Project (Gan Khoon Lay). Original work has been modified.

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.